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Anne Vachon Dougherty
3173 Cedar Road
Yorktown Heights, NY 10598

EXAMINER

BRUCKART, BENJAMIN R

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2155

DATE MAILED: 10/21/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/675,883

Applicant(s)

TAKISHITA, NOBUAKI

Examiner

Benjamin R Bruckart

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 02 September 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 3-6, 8-16 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 3-6 and 8-16 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

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Detailed Action

Status of Claims:

Claims 1, 3-6, 8-16 are pending in this Office Action.

Claims 2 and 7 are canceled.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed on 9/2/2004 with respect to claims 1, 3-6, 8-16 have been fully considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection. See Remarks below.

Applicant's invention as claimed:

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter, which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

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Claim 9 recites the limitation "the updated document. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1, 4, 6, 10, 14, 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being unpatentable over U. S. Patent No. 5,504,889 by Burgess.

Regarding claim 1, a method of indicating user access status for each of a plurality of users of collaborative groupware software (Burgess: col. 2, lines 12-24; col. 4, lines 5-8; reading is accessing; invention monitors files for a plurality of users and holds users bitmaps), said user access status indicating whether each particular user has accessed at least one document of said groupware (Burgess: col. 2, lines 12-24; document in groupware is group monitored by the groupware), said method comprising the steps of:

(a) displaying a status row bar in a view window of each user (Burgess: col. 5, lines 60-66); and

(b) automatically providing a user access status indicating the user access status for each user of each document of said groupware in said displayed status row bar (Burgess: col. 2, lines 12-24), said user access status indication being viewable by said plurality of users of the groupware (Burgess: col. 2, lines 12-24; users can see which ones they have read).

Regarding claim 4, the method according to claim 1, wherein when the documents are divided into document groups (Burgess: col. 1, lines 26-35; categories are groups), each of which consists of a plurality of documents (Burgess: col. 1, lines 26-35; category

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including one or more files), said method further comprising displaying a document group status indication showing whether at least one of the documents in each document group has not been read for each document group (Burgess: col. 2, lines 12-20; col. 3, lines 2-21).

Regarding claim 6, an apparatus for carrying out a method of indicating a user access status regarding access to at least one document of collaborative groupware software for each of a plurality of users of groupware (Burgess: col. 2, lines 12-24; col. 4, lines 5-8; reading is accessing; invention monitors files for a plurality of users and holds users bitmaps), said user access status indicating whether each user has accessed status indicating whether each user has accessed at least one document of said groupware (Burgess: col. 2, lines 12-24; document in groupware is group monitored by the groupware), said apparatus comprising:

a server connected to a network comprising a status determining component for automatically determining and updating user access status for each of said plurality of users and a status database for storing a plurality of user access status indications (Burgess: col. 2, lines 12-24; users can see which ones they have read; Figure 1, tag 100 and tag 107; col. 4, lines 5-8); and

at least one display device for displaying said user access status indications (Burgess: col. 5, lines 60-66).

Regarding claim 14, the apparatus of claim 6, where when the documents are divided into document groups (Burgess: col. 1, lines 26-35; categories are groups), each of which consists of a plurality of documents (Burgess: col. 1, lines 26-35; category including one or more files), said method further comprising displaying a document group status indication showing whether at least one of the documents in each document group has not been read for each document group (Burgess: col. 2, lines 12-20; col. 3, lines 2-21).

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Regarding claim 16, the apparatus according to claim 6 further comprising a user operation section connected said network and including at least one user screen and at least one user input device (Burgess: col. 2, lines 41-53; input device, display device, interface for enabling communication).

Regarding claim 10, a program storage device readable by machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the machine to perform method steps for indicating user access status for each of a plurality of users of collaborative groupware software (Burgess: col. 2, lines 12-24; col. 4, lines 5-8; reading is accessing; invention monitors files for a plurality of users and holds users bitmaps), said user access status indicating whether each particular user has accessed at least one document of said groupware (Burgess: col. 2, lines 12-24; document in groupware is group monitored by the groupware), said method comprising the steps of:

(a) displaying a status row bar in a view window of each user (Burgess: col. 5, lines 60-66); and

(b) automatically providing a user access status indication indicating the user access status for each user of each document of said groupware in said displayed status row bar (Burgess: col. 2, lines 12-24), said user access status indication being viewable by said plurality of users of the groupware (Burgess: col. 2, lines 12-24; users can see which ones they have read).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

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Claims 8, 11-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U. S. Patent No. 5,504,889 by Burgess in view of U.S Patent No 6,230,185 by Salas et al.

Regarding claim 11,

The Burgess reference teaches the method according to claim 1.

The Burgess reference does not explicitly state changing the file.

The Salas reference teaches wherein user status indicates whether a user has changed a document (Salas: col. 5, lines 43-49).

The Salas reference further teaches the system allows user to perform work on files and objects locally and upload them to the server for viewing, comment, or further modification by other project team members (Salas: col. 12, lines 31-37).

Therefore it would have been obvious at the time of the invention to one of ordinary skill in the art to create the system of indicating user status in groupware as taught by Burgess while indicating whether a user has changed a document as taught by Salas in order to allow other project team members to view, comment, or further modify the file (Salas: col. 12, lines 31-37).

Claim 12 is rejected under the same rationale given above. In the rejections set forth, the examiner will address the additional limitations and point to the relevant teachings of Burgess and Salas.

Regarding claim 12, the method according to claim 11, wherein when a user changes a document, the user access status indication for the other of said plurality of users is automatically updated to "not read." (Salas: col. 5, lines 43-49)

Regarding claim 8,

The Burgess reference teaches the apparatus according to claim 6.

The Burgess reference does not explicitly state changing the file.

The Salas reference teaches a status update component, wherein when a user changes a document to provide an updated document (Salas: col. 5, lines 43-49), the

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statuses of the other of said plurality of users are automatically set to “not read” in said status database for said document. (Salas: col. 5, lines 43-49).

The Salas reference further teaches the system allows user to perform work on files and objects locally and upload them to the server for viewing, comment, or further modification by other project team members (Salas: col. 12, lines 31-37).

Therefore it would have been obvious at the time of the invention to one of ordinary skill in the art to create the system of indicating user status in groupware as taught by Burgess while indicating whether a user has changed a document as taught by Salas in order to allow other project team members to view, comment, or further modify the file (Salas: col. 12, lines 31-37).

Claims 3, 13 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U. S. Patent No. 5,504,889 by Burgess in view of U.S Patent No. 5,842,195 by Peters et al.

Regarding claim 3,

The Burgess reference teaches the method according to claim 1.

The Burgess reference does not explicitly state a percentage.

The Peters reference teaches users and groups of users (Peters: col. 3, lines 1-9; col. 19, lines 1-5), and wherein said user access status indication further shows what percentage of the users of each group have read each document for each group (Burgess: col. 21, lines 11-16).

The Peters reference further teaches the system tracks users responses and can be used to send reminders to those who have not responded to prompt action from a few more users (Peters: col. 21, lines 21-45).

Therefore it would have been obvious at the time of the invention to one of ordinary skill in the art to create the system of indicating user status in groupware as taught by Burgess while indicating users and groups as taught by Peters in order to allow the tracking of user responses and remind users to perform an action (Peters: col. 21, lines 21-45).

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Regarding claim 13,

The Burgess reference teaches the apparatus according to claim 6.

The Burgess reference does not explicitly state a percentage.

The Peters reference teaches users and groups of users (Peters: col. 3, lines 1-9; col. 19, lines 1-5), and wherein said user access status indication further shows what percentage of the users of each group have read each document for each group (Burgess: col. 21, lines 11-16).

The Peters reference further teaches the system tracks users responses and can be used to send reminders to those who have not responded to prompt action from a few more users (Peters: col. 21, lines 21-45).

Therefore it would have been obvious at the time of the invention to one of ordinary skill in the art to create the system of indicating user status in groupware as taught by Burgess while indicating users and groups as taught by Peters in order to allow the tracking of user responses and remind users to perform an action (Peters: col. 21, lines 21-45).

Claim 15 is rejected under the same rationale given above. In the rejections set forth, the examiner will address the additional limitations and point to the relevant teachings of Burgess and Peters.

Regarding claim 15, the apparatus of claim 6 further comprising a manager operation section connected to said network and comprising a manager input device and a manager screen (Peters: col. 11, lines 59-64; PC; input means, video display means).

Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U. S. Patent No. 5,504,889 by Burgess in view of U.S Patent No 6,230,185 by Salas et al in further view of U.S Patent No. 5,842,195 by Peters et al.

Regarding claim 9,

The Burgess reference teach the apparatus according to claim 6.

The Burgess reference does not explicitly state notifying of a changed file.

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The Salas reference teaches wherein user status indicates whether a user has changed a document (Salas: col. 5, lines 43-49).

The Salas reference further teaches the system allows user to perform work on files and objects locally and upload them to the server for viewing, comment, or further modification by other project team members (Salas: col. 12, lines 31-37).

The Peters reference teaches mail generation component from which a mail is sent to members of a specific group who have not read the document (Peters: col. 21, lines 21-36; mail sent to remind of the survey).

The Peters reference further teaches the system tracks users responses and can be used to send reminders to those who have not responded to prompt action from a few more users (Peters: col. 21, lines 21-45).

Therefore it would have been obvious at the time of the invention to one of ordinary skill in the art to create the system of indicating user status in groupware as taught by Burgess and Salas while indicating whether a user has changed a document as taught by Salas as well as notifying them as taught by Peters in order to allow other project team members to view, comment, or further modify the file (Salas: col. 12, lines 31-37) as well as track user responses and remind users to view comment and take action (Peters: col. 21, lines 21-45).

Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U. S. Patent No. 5,504,889 by Burgess in view of U.S Patent No. 6,057,835 by Sato et al.

Regarding claim 5,

The Burgess reference the method according to claim 1.

The Burgess reference does not explicitly state color or pattern.

The Sato reference teaches status indication is provided by colors or patterns (Sato: col. 9, lines 18-28; col. 13, lines 9-16).

The Sato reference further teaches the invention provides a united interface to improve the operability of the users (Sato: col. 3, lines 56-60).

Therefore it would have been obvious at the time of the invention to one of ordinary skill in the art to create the system of indicating user status in groupware as taught by Burgess

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while using colors or patterns as taught by Sato in order to improve the operability of the users (Sato: col. 3, lines 56-60).

REMARKS

The Applicant Argues:

With respect to the independent claims, applicant argues there is nothing that suggests or teaches that multiple users be allowed to view a single user's read status for stored documents.

In response, the examiner respectfully submits:

The claimed limitations do not read where multiple users read each other user's status pertaining to a document. The claim reads user access status indication being viewable by said plurality of users of the groupware. The groupware is the monitoring function as described by (Burgess col. 4, lines 5-8) which provides the user his access status (Burgess: col. 2, lines 12-14). The indication is viewable by the user who is a user of the groupware system. The applicant's argument is taken under advisement but the broadest interpretation of the claim shown above shows the user can see his user access indication status since he is a user of the groupware. Not that other users can see a particular users status.

Applicant argues the Burgess references does not automatically track, update, and display user access for each user of the groupware.

In response, the examiner respectfully submits:

The Burgess reference teaches tracking (col. 2, lines 12-24) whether a user has read a document or group documents, updating (col. 5, lines 60-66) a document when it is read and displaying (Burgess: col. 2, lines 12-24; col. 5, lines 60-66) users can see which documents or groups of documents they have read.

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Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Benjamin R Bruckart whose telephone number is (703) 305-0324 until 10/27/2004 and 571-272-3982 after. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:00-5:30 PM with every other Friday off.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Hosain Alam can be reached on (703) 308-6662 until 10/27/2004 and 571-272-3978 after. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 872-9306 for regular communications and After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 305-0324 until 10/27/2004 and 571-272-3982 after.

Benjamin R Bruckart
Examiner
Art Unit 2155

brb
October 6, 2004

brb

Hosain Alam
HOSAIN ALAM
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER